In other cases, the mind is hardened into a confirmed rebellion against God and all that is good. This effect follows, whenever it is constrained to look constantly at the sins of which it yet does not repent.

In ordinary circumstances the passions of the soul, by means of the conspiracy which they have hatched, contrive to deceive the conscience, but they will not always be so successful. Speaking of the conscience, Bishop Reynolds says—"Though in many men it sleep in regard to motion, yet it never sleeps in regard to observation and notice—it may be heard and seared, it can never be blind. That writing on it, which seems invisible and illegible, like letters written with the juice of lemon, when it is brought to the fire of God's judgments, will be most clear."* The time is coming when the mask which man wears will be torn off, and his character will be displayed to himself in all its hideousness and deformity. There are circumstances occurring in the world quite sufficient to explain what is here meant.

Let us look, in the way of marking the operations of the mind, at those persons who go on for years in a course of undetected sin, but who are afterwards exposed. There is a servant, let us suppose, cheating his master, or one of the sex in which chastity is so highly valued giving way to an unlawful lust; we are to mark the state of mind of such persons, first, when the sin is yet concealed, and then when it comes to be detected and published. Though they will, no doubt, be troubled all along with secret misgivings and reproaches, it is astonishing to find what habitual calmness they may assume—nay, what complacency they may feel, at least if they have no difficulty in concealing their sins. After the first awkwardness has been conquered, it is conceivable that the parties may feel at ease in the very presence of the master deceived, or of the husband to whom the wife has proved unfaithful. It is evident that, besides a studious

concealment from the eyes of others, there is also a hiding of the sin from the eyes of the guilty parties themselves. They think of the sinful deed as seldom as possible ; and when it is brought before the mind, it is in a disguised dress and appearance. Society will condemn the deed when known, and equally certain is it that the conscience will condemn it every time it is presented. If the scorn of men be difficult to endure, the constant gnawing of

* Bishop Reynolds on the Affections.